

Across the Continent to the Home of Oranges and Co-operation

Skill in Production, Economy in Distribution and Team Work All Along the Line Are What Bring Success to the "Sunkist" Sign

By Anne Lewis Pierce, Director
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IT IS not so long ago that oranges were a "tropical treat"; they went in the toe of the Christmas stocking or graced the ornamental fruit dish on festive occasions. Now they are the regular order for breakfast—almost as automatic as the egg. Science has declared them healthful for the babe or the grandfere; they always were good to eat and invigorating even to look upon.

Seldom can one combine pleasure and a sense of duty well performed more happily than when eating an orange. You may have to argue down the wholesome spinach, but not the orange.

But despite the appeal of the orange itself and its healthfulness they would have grown more and more rare had the conditions of marketing and production of twenty-seven years ago continued. Then two million boxes of oranges a year were often sold at a loss; now ten to twelve times as many are marketed at a profit—and consumption has doubled in the past twelve years.

An Industrial Benefit and a Public Service

A wholesome increase in a wholesome food is a public service viewed industrially or as a public health proposition. The consumer always pays the price in money or in lack of supplies for inefficiency in the production or handling of any food supply. In the case of the development of the citrus fruits of California the cost of selling has decreased as production increased. With all the increases in cost of doing business that have marked the past ten years, total selling costs (including some \$3,000,000 spent in national advertising) amount to only 2 per cent of the returns, the only advertising cost averaging now only .066 of 1 per cent. This is probably the cheapest marketing expense known for a perishable food. And it shows a decrease from 3.28 per cent in 1905.

Right away we hear some one say: "But what about the cost to the consumer?" Has the price of oranges or lemons gone down? This point is of necessity relative. Labor, freight rates, all costs of production have gone up—and the price of these fruits, fixed largely by public auction, is governed by supply and demand. If the lemon crop is small and the summer following very hot, the price goes up automatically. Then, again, they may be selling in cooler weather at a price less than production cost. A careful comparison shows that the price of oranges and lemons during

the past six years has only once (due to a general shortage of crop in Florida and California) equaled the rise in price recorded for ninety-six staple commodities, lagging behind other rises some 12 to 40 per cent.

A drop in price that is extreme may profit the consumer for a season, but if it discourages the producer to the point of decreased production another season sees a shortage and a higher price. A fair profit for every one is the healthy aim. The crux of the matter was covered in the last paragraph of the

The late G. Harold Powell, general manager of the California Fruit Growers Exchange, who by his rare equipment of scientific knowledge, organizing ability, stabilizing judgment and faith in his fellow men rendered a national service to the cause of industrial co-operation



A standing army of oil burners is all that can save the orange orchard when Jack Frost makes a sudden attack on the fruit of seven years' labor and waiting

recent report by the late G. Harold Powell on "Fundamentals of Co-operative Marketing," when he said that such organizations "must serve the public as well as their own members if they are to constitute effective agencies through which the complex problems of American agriculture are to be solved in the ultimate interests of the whole nation."

Nation-wide advertising has here definitely marketed a high grade, constantly increasing crop and saved an industry. You cannot stop the tree from bearing when it gets under way any more than you can hurry the seedling into activity. A perishable crop must be handled at once and "tied in" merchandising generalship plus honest educational campaigns of advertising have done it cheaply and well.

The Fruit Itself—What It Means to Raise an Orange

JUST as there is no luck about the steady improvement in the distribution of the citrus fruits of California, three thousand miles from market, so there is nothing hit or miss about the efforts that lie back of the graded quality fruit produced.

Two of the pioneer seedless navel orange trees that reached California in 1873 are still living, and their progeny (produced by grafting buds of known pedigree onto two-year-old trees raised from seed) cover a large part of the 175,000 acres of California orange orchards. It is three or four years from the time the seed is sown before the tree takes its place in the orchard, and it comes into bearing in six years, though it does not do its best until ten years of age.

Through this long time of wait-

ing there is systematic pruning; six or seven irrigations a summer, cultivation after each water application to retain the precious and expensive moisture (which must be brought over one hundred miles and cost \$40 an acre), fumigating and spraying. All these considerations swell the costs to some \$200 or \$300 an acre a year.

Fighting the Frost

Then, when all is done, there may come a frost. However great his skill and industry, your farmer must always be a sportsmanlike gambler. He must act wisely and quickly to save not only the crop on the tree, but the tree itself. Twice in ten years this disaster has fallen on the California growers, and there is a whole romance in the preparedness, incessant watchfulness and the final, alert and sustained attack when,

picking, grading and packing. Never is a lemon or orange pulled. Each is cut close with special clippers, so that no sharp stem may puncture its neighbor, and the fruits are literally "handled with gloves," as any bruising or breaking of the skin means spoilage and loss.

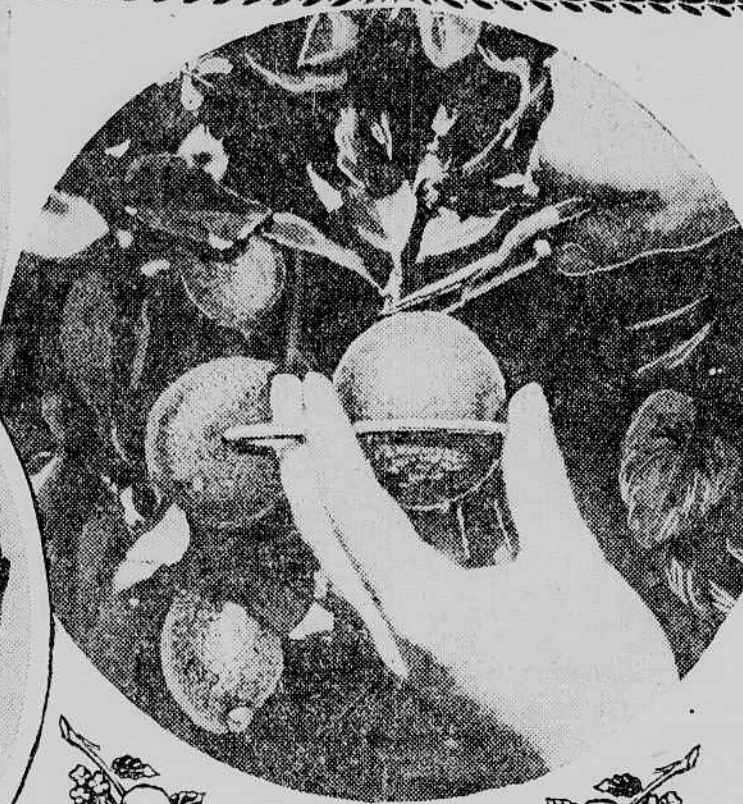
The improvement and standardization in handling methods alone, one of the first contributions made by the late general manager, Harold Powell, has saved the industry thousands of dollars and made the high grade of the Sunkist brand possible. "Handle them like eggs" is a slogan that means something in the orange grove.

The beautiful, airy packing houses strike an Easterner with awe because of their loftiness (ventilation plays its part), and here the fruit is given a warm bath and a cold shower, dried with a blast of air and passed on to the grader. Experts grade it for color, freedom from scars, texture, etc., and the Sunkist quality is selected, about half the supply making this grade.

Automatic belts carry the fruits to appropriate bins and a system of two rollers cleverly separates and grades the oranges into different sizes, dropping the graded and sized fruits softly into canvass lined receivers.

White-clad, gloved girls put on the tissue wrapper and place the orange, that has been some seven years or more in the making and has escaped all the accidents of weather and pests and attained Sunkist perfection, into a carefully made box which is often pre-cooled before it is loaded into the refrigerator car for its long trip East.

About 79 cents a box is the expense acquired between the picker and the railroad car. Almost one would love the orange "for the dangers it has known," after following its life history from the grafting of the pedigreed bud in the nursery through the long journey in the refrigerated car. No wonder it is full



There is shown the careful method of clipping the lemon or orange from the tree; the ring that is used to size each lemon or orange before it is picked

Below is a seedling on which has been grafted the pedigreed bud warranted to produce seedless navel oranges of high character and uniform quality

of health, healing and pleasure, vitamins and joy by the time it yields up its juice for your breakfast eye-opener or Volstead beverage, appears for dessert in the baby's cocktail or grandmother's egg flip. No, there is no "happenstance" about these quality fruits. There is a well planned campaign back of every one. What a world it would be if humans were so carefully produced and started in life!

The Important Lemon

AND the lemon must not be overlooked. The acidity of the lemon is merely seeming. Like the orange, it yields wholesome salts and a needed alkalinity when the body has digested it. The same careful methods are applied to its production. It comes into bearing a little quicker than the orange—four to eight years—and it blossoms the year round, developing its fruit in nine months, so that buds, blossoms and fruit are all on the tree at once and every month pickings must be made.

Besides carefully clipping the lemon from the tree it is sized by a ring and is gathered only when it will not go through a ring 2 1/2 inches in diameter. The green and yellow fruit is separated by hand, the latter being shipped and the former held in storage rooms (65 degrees) to cure.

Over three-fourths of our lemons are from southern California and 80 per cent of the oranges. Half of these are the navels which come from January to May, while the Valencia, smaller and with a few seeds sometimes, meet the summer and autumn demand. This gives the orange industry another stabilizing influence, for any seasonal output that keeps men and machinery and buildings busy but part of the year and "eats its head off" for six months or so, puts a heavy tax on production.

By-products and Insectaries Are Economic Phases

OTHER notable economies are the by-products plants, where experts study methods of making citric acid, dehydrated orange powder, jams and jellies, etc., from the good fruit that does not grade high enough in appearance for sale as such. One most notable venture is the taking over of the Blessing electric orange machine, which should give us every-

where pure orange juice, squeezed while you wait, and iced, instead of the very inferior beverage sweetened and weakened, and often bittered by standing, which so many of the orange drinks represent.

A real detriment is done the public palate and the public health when so delicious and so healthful a drink as orange juice is made unpalatable and loses its integrity, even though the substitute is not actually injurious. The loss is great and the adulteration real when such a bev-

The California Fruit Growers Exchange—How It Works

IN THESE days when industrial knots are being drawn tighter and tighter, when labor and capital and farmer and wholesaler and retailer too often compound mistrust and regard life as a three-cornered fight in which one man's gain must be another's loss; when our more socialistic friends tell us that it is no one's fault but "the system doesn't register" and we must have a new one—at this point it is of the most fundamental interest and importance to have it proved to you that a group of 10,500 growers scattered over a wide territory can work together to solve their problems of production and marketing to every one's advantage—working in purely democratic fashion through 203 local associations and twenty district exchanges.

These agencies bring the oranges into the exchange in an orderly, controlled manner, then they move out through sixty-three organized district managers into the hands of 2,500 jobbers, who pass them on through some 400,000 retailers to the 113,000,000 consumers. It is an industrial army, organized for peaceful accomplishment, with a real service to be performed by each, and a fair reward assured. The middleman is a menace only when he is a dead spot—when he adds to cost and

erage is degraded in quality and its use limited.

On the Teague model ranch, near Santa Paula, extensive experiments are being made in the propagation of intelligent insects which when "turned loose" destroy black scale, cleaning up an orchard in an amazingly short time. This experimental work, which has failed in some sections, is being most successfully carried out on the extensive Teague property and means a saving of many thousands of dollars yearly, as contrasted with the expense of fighting scale by fumigation.

These are notable examples of the many economic undertakings, val-

policy, and the "one man, one vote" principle rules. There is no capital stock, no earnings or profits or dividends, no taking on of unrelated problems to begot the main issue. The exchange is operated to distribute the crop; costs and any surplus are perated on the number of boxes shipped, and working capital contributed is paid 6 per cent interest and kept as nearly as possible in proportion to the growers' shipments.

The mirage of "price fixing" which misleads many has been steadfastly avoided, supply and demand governing price, though, of course, through advices from the district managers shipments are directed so as neither to glut nor undersupply the market.

Another fundamental that has not been forgotten is that the growers must not only co-operate with one another, but with all those with whom they do business down the line. Good habits are just as catching as bad ones, and the spirit of co-operation, once it is grasped and proved good, runs straight through an organization.

Co-operation a Growth-Promoting Vitamine of Industry

The West has its mountains, with their feet on the vast and solid earth and their heads in the clouds, worthy prototypes of its pioneer men who have fused the ideals of faith and confidence with the practical base of sound fundamentals. Both are equally inspiring to the seeing traveler in the Western country, and both have a lesson for the East.

Just as salutary to industrial well being as the orange juice itself is to the physical health, is this successful example of sound, sane, sustained, thoughtful effort of men to stand shoulder to shoulder for conservation and constructive effort with all the faith and intensity that heretofore have been given only to war and defense.

It must have two well balanced parts to be successful. Sound business principles, skilled management and legal organization are essential. But this furnishes only the machinery. The steam to move it, the spirit of it, lies in the will to co-operate and in confidence based on absolute openness of operation. Mr. Powell urged this policy in and out of season, not only among the members of the exchange, to whom the weekly meeting of the directors is open, but also that the growers should make "their aims and objects entirely clear to the trade, the consumers and the official public, as co-operative success is built upon good faith as well as upon good works."

Highly as we esteem the orange and lemon crops, we cannot but feel in these times of shifting standards, world-wide unrest and futile seeking for easy cure-alls and panaceas that the crop of confidence and successful co-operation that the California Fruit Growers Exchange raises every year, whether there be a frost or not, is a still greater national asset and one by which we all should profit.

(Tested and endorsed by The Tribune Institute)

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